

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:DMACK

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:DMACK

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P 240939Z FEB 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 044006 TOSEC 040250

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM KINSHASA DATED FEBRUARY 24, 1976

SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO CAIRO IS REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 1600

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EAID, MASS, OVIP (ROBINSON, CHARLES W.), CG

SUBJECT:PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOBUTU IN MEETING WITH UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON PICTURED ZAIRE AS SURROUNDED BY COMMUNIST-LEANING OR UNDEPENDABLE NEIGHBORS AND URGED USG TO ASSIST ZAIRE IN BECOMING "AN ISLAND OF PROSPERITY" AND MILITARILY SECURE. UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON RESPONDED THAT USG WAS CONCERNED AS TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MPLA TRIUMPH IN ANGOLA AND THE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OF SOVIET-SUPPORTED CUBAN FORCES THERE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT US WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO MOBUTU'S REQUESTS FOR ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

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1. DURING PRE-BREAKFAST AND BREAKFAST DISCUSSION WITH MOBUTU, ROBISON SAID HIS VISIT EXPRESSED THE CONTINUING SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR ZAIRE AND APPRECIATION OF DIFFICULTIES COMPOUNDED BY MPLA SUCCESS IN ANGOLA.

2. MOBUTU DESCRIBED ZAIRE'S SITUATION AS INCREASINGLY SURROUNDED BY "RED" COUNTRIES--ANGOLA AND CABINDA, CONGO, TANZANIA AND THE VOLATILE UGANDA. HE FORESAW CONTINUED CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, IMPLYING FUTHER ACTION BEYOND ANGOLA. "THE FEAST IS VERY TEMPTING DOWN THERE," HE SAID.

3. ZAIRE'S STRATEGY MUST BE TO "TURN ZAIRE INTO AN ISLAND OF PROSPERITY," MOBUTU SAID. HE CITED EVIDENCE ALREADY REACHING HIM THAT ZAIRE POPULACE WAS INTERPRETING THE POSTPONEMENT OF FURTHER WORK ON THE SMTF COOPER PROJECT AS EVIDENCE THAT "AMERICANS ARE WALKING AWAY FROM ZAIRE"--DISREGARDING SUBSTANTIAL ROLES OF BRITISH, FRENCH, JAPANESE IN THIS PROJECT.

4. MOBUTU CALLED THE INTERDICTION OF BENGUELA RAILWAY THROUGH ANGOLA (SEVERAL MAJOR BRIDGES BLOWN) AS AIMED AT STRANGLING ZAIRE BECAUSE IT IS VITAL TO THE SHABA REGION WHICH IS THE SOURCE OF 70 PERCENT OF ZAIRE'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS AND 50 PERCENT OF ITS BUDGET REVENUES.

5. MOBUTU CALLED IN ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF TO PRESENT PROPOSED REVISIONS OF ROCKWELL REPORT ON MODERNIZATION OF ZAIRE ARMED FORCES. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE ZAIRE'S REQUEST FOR TANKS--EQUIPMENT WHICH ROCKWELL EARLIER DISMISSED AS IMPRACTICAL IN ZAIRE'S TERRAIN BUT WHICH SOVIET-ARMED MPLA AND CUBANS USED TO EXCELLENT ADVANTAGE ACCORDING TO MOBUTU. (ZAMISH WILL FORWARD ANALYSIS AND DETAILS TO DOD AND STATE).

6. MOBUTU URGED QUICK AND POSITIVE RESPONSE BY USG ON BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT.

7. ROBINSON EXPRESSED HOPE THAT US CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDED TOWARD ASSITANCE TO ZAIRE WOULD BE MORE POSITIVE THAN CONFIDENTIAL

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AT TIME OF PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT COMPETING FACTIONS IN ANGOLA. HE SUGGESTED MULTIALTERAL GROUP APPROACH TO SUPPORT OF ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC STABILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, ALONG LINES OF PAST CONSULTATIVE GROUP. HE POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS GOING TO SHABA TODAY AS PART OF A STUDY OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO RE-ESTABLISH SMTG COOPER PROJECTM HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT USG WOULD GIVE PROMPT, SRIIOUS CONSIDERATION TO SECURITY ASSITANCE REQUESTS BUT

COULD NOT COMMENT ON AMOUNTS OR SPECIFICS.

8. THROUGHTOUT MEETING, NO QUANTITIES OF EITHER ECONOMIC
OR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WERE MENTIONED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, TOSEC, MILITARY EQUIPMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE044006
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:DMACK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760068-0698
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760218/aaaaapfv.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 OCT 2004 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RESIDENT MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOBUTU IN MEETING WITH UNDERSECRETARY
TAGS: EAID, MASS, OVIP, CG, US, (ROBINSON, CHARLES W)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006